

# BURWICK'S BAKING POWDER.

Third  
Series

NOVEMBER,  
1893.

VOL  
10

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM  
YEAR TO YEAR."

## All the Year Round

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

PART 59.

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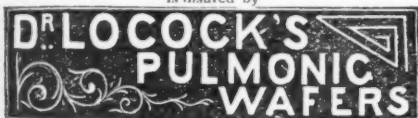
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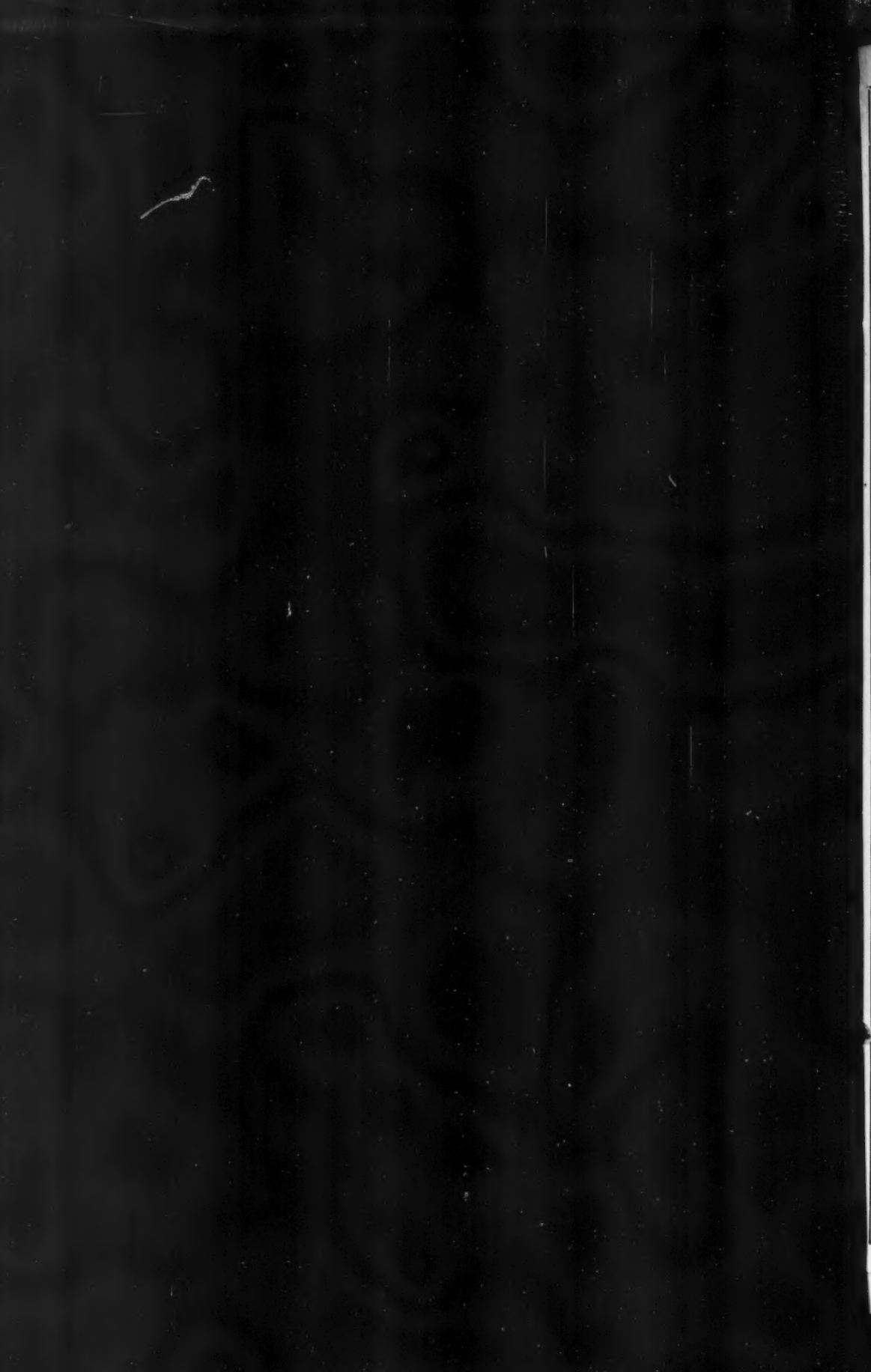
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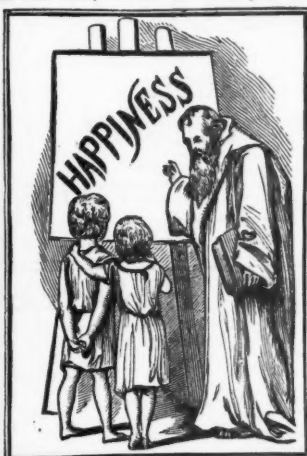


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It is a short letter, this is, and we can just as well quote the whole of it. The writer says: "It was in November, 1887, when I began to feel tired and weary. It seemed as if I had no strength left in me. Before that I had always been strong and healthy. My appetite was poor, and for days together I could not touch any food that was placed before me. After every meal that I did succeed in forcing down I had such dreadful pains in the chest and back that I was almost afraid to eat. Then there was a sharp pain around the heart, too, as though I was stabbed with a knife.

"I lost a deal of sleep, and for nights together I didn't sleep at all. Then I began to lose flesh rapidly, and was afraid I was going into a consumption. Yet I kept on with my work, however, but it was a hard thing for me, because I was so weak and nervous that I trembled from head to foot. As time went on I gradually got worse and

worse, and my eyes were sunken and drawn in. I consulted a doctor in Kentish Town. He gave me medicine, but it did no good. After all this I got the idea into my head that I should not recover.

"One day a lady came into the shop, and noticing the state I was in, kindly asked how long I had been ill. I told her all about it, and she said, 'You try Mother Seigel's Curative Syrup; it has made me well, and I believe it will do you good.'

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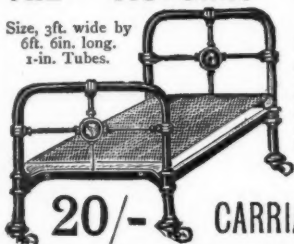
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### THROUGH THE RANKS.

By MRS. LEITH-ADAMS.

(MRS. R. S. DE COURCY LAFFAN.)

Author of "Aunt Hepsy's Foundling," "My Land of Beulah,"  
"Bonnie Kate," "The Peyton Romance," etc., etc.

#### CHAPTER X. THE VOICE OF THE STORM.

MEANTIME, while stir and tumult were gathering over the country like a storm-cloud about to burst, the hush that precedes the footsteps of the quiet Angel of Death was falling upon the little shanty in the Shandon Valley. Patsey's tiny feet were entering the borders of that dark valley that each of us must pass through.

So very little of life's burden had been Patsey's, that one might have thought it but a small thing to lay down. And yet it seemed to cost a deal of trouble, and pain, and weariness in the process, and very tired was Patsey as the sleepless night grew to the dawning day, and the weary day died to eventide.

The poor cannot tend their sick quite as the rich do; there is the daily wage to be earned no matter who is sick, or who lies still with a sheet over the closed eyes that shall open no more in this world. The heart may be heavy and the eyes blind with tears, but the hands cannot be idle, and the tears must be dashed aside—since none can work and weep at the same time. Patsey's father loved his son quite as dearly as Major Henneker loved dainty little Missey, but he could not sit beside the wooden bed and hold the little burning hand in his for hours of the day, as the Major would have held Missey's had that household fairly been laid low. The outward manner of things varies, but the inner grace is the same.

It might have been noticed, about this time, that if the man went out late—when the shadows were deep in the narrow street, and the distant hills were blurs of grey against the black—he would step softly, nay, timorously, if such a word can be applied to such a shaggy specimen of humanity, lest poor Patsey should be aroused from that fitful stupor that sometimes soothed his pain. When he came in early—when the hills were black against the grey, and tiny birds were twittering softly in the hedges—he seemed to grow more timorous still; and, as he passed the little bed, faintly seen in outline in the scarce born light, would fumble in his bosom as though he made the sign that binds the world in one.

To bring trouble on himself, he did not care for that; but to bring trouble upon Patsey!

In fancy he heard the rhythmic ring of feet; the fall of the rifles on the floor at the word of command; saw the stern, set faces of men who recognised no power except that of duty—men who would fire on their own fathers or brothers if the word were given; saw a figure with a ghastly likeness to himself marching in between two others; saw little Patsey sitting up in bed with his skinny arms stretched out; heard his shrill, piping cry of "Daddy! Daddy!" heard it grow fainter and fainter and die into silence as the sound of the measured steps passed down the narrow street, away—away—into some strange new world.

The benediction spoken of old in Galilee upon the "little child set in the midst," still lingers like a ray of light, shining through the centuries; touching the golden hair of countless thousands, lighting up the innocent eyes, making the hardest



heart afraid in the offending of "one of these little ones."

The barrack square lay bathed in the rich autumn sunlight. Here and there it glinted on an awkward squad; young, untried soldiers driving old hands mad; getting tied up in knots, and having to be yelled straight again; but young and old alike wore scarlet coats, and the colour gleamed and glowed, and seemed to help the jocund aspect of the day.

About the big gateway hung various admirers of the show; spectators always to be seen gazing yearningly into any place where soldiers are, and upon whom the eye of the recruiting sergeant falls with a sifting and appraising energy.

Among these a ragged urchin shoved his hatchet-face well to the fore, his wide Irish mouth one huge grin of delight, as some unfortunate recruit came a worse cropper than the rest, and was shouted at with wilder vehemence and more energetic language.

"Arrah now!" screamed the boy, "hasn't he got the two lift ligs on him, the om-madhaun! See the arrums of him, how he carries thim sthickin' out like two sthakes in a hedge, an' the back of him that's like ould Magg'e Flanagan's high-shouldered hin that got itself caught in a cog-wheel and dislocationed its spine, begorra!"

The exultation of this last ejaculation was all too weak to express Tim's—for of course it was our friend—sense of joy; so he had to invert his small, lank body, and take three steps each way on his hands.

"Now then, young man, right way up, please, and off you go," said a smart young soldier, who was pacing up and down slapping his scarlet-striped leg with a dainty cane; "we don't want any one here playing soldiers upside-down—we don't."

Tim was all on fire in a moment.

"Oh, yer don't, don't yer!" he cried, striking an alarmingly warlike attitude. "Shure I'm as good a sol'ger as yerself any day of the week, praise be to the blessed saints all day and every day. Look here, now," and Tim drew himself up straight as a ramrod, shouldering an imaginary rifle, the while he sang out lustily:

Step in toime,  
And form the loine,

doing a small sentry-go of his own in really first-rate style.

"What are ye after, ye spawn o' the devil!" said Coghlan, coming rapidly out

of the yard at this juncture. "I'm just of a mind to think you're a d—d Fenian; so be off wid yourself before I give ye up to the guard and get yer blessed head took off before ye can snaze."

"He's a spoy—that's what he is," said another soldier standing near.

"I'm a spoy, am I, ye robber of the dead?" cried Tim, his spindle-shanks well apart, his tousled hair seeming to stand on end with rage. "Bad cess to ye for a lot of ill-mannered scoundrils, you'd like to see me wid the darbies on me, an' the mounted polis before and behint me—but I've more conduct than any of ye, and I'm come up here to seek a frind o' mine—"

The men were full of the soldier's easy laughter by this time, only Drummer Coghlan keeping a grave face on him.

"Who's your friend, eh?" said half-a-dozen voices, but Tim took no notice; he was staring straight in front of him across the square.

"Shure and here's the iligant gintleman as knows me, and will speak to my char-ack-ter befront of ye's all. . . ."

It was the Adjutant, and he came on slowly towards the gate, taking no heed of the little stir going on there; there is usually some sort of a stir going on at a barrack gate; the sentry shouldered arms, the Captain returned the salute, and then—

"Shure an' it's glad I am to see ye, Colonel, this blessed minute," said the unabashed and unabashable Tim. And Ellerton looked up to see the elfish figure of the boy, and to meet the joyous recognition of two twinkling eyes set in a sun-browned face; "shure ye haven't forgotten me, nor the silver penny ye gave me the time ye were bowin' the ladies about so ginteel; and another time didn't I show ye the way to the little church whin ye axed me—"

Captain Ellerton interrupted the boy curtly.

"I know the lad," he said to one of the men standing by; "what does he want?"

"An' how would the likes of him be after knowin' what I want?" said Tim, coming close, and peering up into Ellerton's face; "he's got no sinse—glory be!—but yer honour's a different case, an' I'll tell yer all the heart of it. It's Miss Alison I'm after, for poor Patsey he's all the time cryin' out for his own dear lady, an' Norah O'Connor she's knaling be the bed an' Patsey close hold on her gownd, the pains is that awful, an' she'll stay till the shadders cross the street, but then she'll



have to be after goin', for Mrs. O'Connor's took bad in her legs, an' cryin' out night and day—an' Phelim he's there too along w' Patsey . . . an' the holy Praste, he's there too."

"There's enough of 'em, any way," growled Coghlan; and somehow the other men looked to the drummer to take the law into his own hands, and take the necessary step to let Miss Drew know of Tim's visit. The Hundred and Ninety-Third began to recognise the fact that Drummer Coghlan was, in a way, part and parcel of Major Henneker's establishment.

"Go across to Major Henneker's," said Captain Elerton shortly, and away went Coghlan to seek out Eliza and warn her that her young mistress was wanted down in the valley.

The sun-light was beginning to pale as Alison and Elsie set off to see little Patsey. Both were very silent. There is something in the approach of death that falls upon the spirit as the darkness of night upon the world; that comes with a brooding, mysterious silence, as though the awestruck soul were conscious of the added nearness of the world invisible.

It was touching to see Patsey's joy in the presence of his dear lady. He stroked her hand, and looked up lovingly into her grave, sweet face. Elsie had to go and stand at the little dingy window, pretending she could see something through it. Not much of life's discipline had come to Elsie yet. The heavy hand of sorrow had not been laid upon her, bidding her be patient and endure, as it had upon Alison. Her tears were ready as her smiles and laughter, and the music of her life was sweet. Presently it would hold deeper chords; and here and there a minor cadence.

Patsey had all his dear toys beside him. They stood upon an improvised table, an old hamper turned upside down, and covered with a bit of snow-white cotton stuff, that his mother had washed out, and then carefully bleached upon the hedge. They were having a holiday, those toys. The very white sheep were in their box, each animal wrapped in a tiny bit of cotton wool; the very green trees were each wrapped in a scrap of paper; but the lid was kept off so that Patsey could see them lying there if he liked to turn his weary little head that way. Every now and then he would touch them feebly; as he touched Phelim's head, that devoted creature wriggling his whole body in lieu

of his tail to testify his delight. Norah, those sad eyes of hers big with tears, knelt by Patsey's side.

"He's livelier than he was an hour or two since," said Patsey's mother to Alison; "onct I thought the life was out of him, an' I down on me two knees, prayin' the Holy Mother to howld him tight in her blessed arrums, but he opened his sweet eyes, an' 'Mother,' says he, 'I'm not gone,' says he, 'grip my hand,' says he, 'an' howld on to keep me a little while till I see my dear lady's face.'"

In a little while it began to grow dusk, and with many tender, loving words and gentle kisses to wee Patsey, the two girls set off home.

"It will not be long now," said Alison; "and oh, Elsie, what a thing it is to be thankful for that we have been allowed to brighten that poor little life, even ever so little! It is the one happiness that never fails us, no matter how deep our own sorrows may be, how desolate our own lives—the chance of bringing some little light into the dark places of the world."

"You must have felt very desolate, Alison, when your mother died."

Elsie's voice was rather catchy, but she felt constrained to satisfy a new longing to strive to see into the deeper depths of life.

"I felt as though the sun would never shine again—as though the flowers would all fade and wither. It was terrible, that weight of loneliness, when one's dearest and best has gone across the waters that no bridge may span—but I am making you cry with my sad talk, and here is Mr. Verrinder coming. He will wonder what is amiss."

But to their great surprise, Mr. Verrinder passed them with nothing more than a sweeping bow; and they noticed—even in that short glimpse of him—that all the fun and merriment seemed to have died out of his face, and his eyes were heavy and grave.

The cousins walked on in silence for a long time, and when at last Elsie spoke, it was a somewhat small, faint voice, and her remark had reference to nothing in particular; indeed, Alison passed it by unheeded, and struck out a line of her own.

"Elsie, do you think we can have offended Mr. Verrinder in any way? I should be so very sorry, he is such a good fellow. Dad says no one can think too highly of him, he is so straight."

"Straight or crooked, I suppose he has a right to be offended if he likes."

"Of course; but still, it seems so strange."

"I don't know of any law that obliges a Lieutenant to join the daughters of the Senior Major, if he meets them out walking, do you?"

"Elsie!"

"Well, if Mr. Verrinder is vexed with us, what does it matter, after all?"

"Nothing, of course."

Alison knew that when in one of those reckless humours it was useless to try and do anything with Elsie. And the grey dusk had by this time closed in upon them, so that she could not see the shimmer of tears in the girl's eyes.

Both were glad to see the lights of home shining in the windows, and a fairy figure—little Missy—all in white, with golden locks, making wild gestures of welcome from the head of the staircase.

"To see her like that, and then to think of little Patsy!" said Elsie. "It teaches me what it is to be thankful."

Then Alison knew that the reckless mood had passed, and found herself gently wondering what had given it birth.

Norah, too, had to set out homewards, and Phelim, torn in two by a longing to stay with Patsy, and a longing to go with his mistress, had, after an evident mental struggle, decided upon the latter course. It was that brooding time of evening when things that were objectionable from every point of view, and ought most certainly to be put an end to as promptly as possible, were most likely to be abroad, and Phelim set to work to harry them and make their lives as miserable as possible. He rushed hither and thither, sniffing into this crevice and into that, fancying the gleam of a rabbit's tail in every flicker, and making sure that a rat lurked in the shadow of every stone. At last, after a convulsion of scratching that covered his face with mould, Phelim succeeded in unearthing a wretched little mole, who had doubtless strayed from his mother's side and taken a fatal stroll towards the mouth of the domestic burrow. Phelim had no pity to bestow upon vermin; he would have wagged his tail if he could, as he bore the furry thing in his teeth, with intent to lay it at Norah's feet.

But there was no Norah to be seen. Still gripping the mole, Phelim turned his trot into an ambling canter, and so rounded a sharp turn of the road that was now both dusk and lonely.

There was his mistress at last, and by

her side a tall, dark figure, which Phelim no sooner saw than he dropped his dead prey, set up his bristly coat on end, drew up his lips in an evil grin, and set to walking on the balls of his feet, and lowering his head as he went. Then he growled ominously, coming so close to Captain Ellerton's heels—for the intruder was no other—that that gentleman gave him a vicious kick, thereby losing both dignity and sentiment.

"A little bird told me that you would be coming home this way to-night," said Ellerton, to the shrinking woman by whose side he walked; but Norah made no answer.

Her hand falling to her side grasped her beads, in a tense, nervous clasp, and she did not even let them go when, with a sudden movement, her companion passed his arm round her supple waist, and strove his best to look into her averted face.

Beneath his arm he could feel her heart fluttering like a bird in the hand of its captor; he could see the heavy rise and fall of her breast; he could say to himself that the rich, ripe tint of the oval cheek which was all he could see beneath the heavy, drooping braid of her rippling hair, was the loveliest he had ever seen; he could smile at her helplessness in his firm, unyielding grasp.

Though Ellerton could not see the girl's face, he could hear her muttering in a low and trembling voice:

"Holy Mary, Mother of God—Holy Mary. . . ."

Then he put his hand beneath her dimpled chin, turned her face towards him, and silenced the quivering lips with a kiss.

It seemed as though disgust gave her new strength. With a rapid movement she wrenched herself from his hold, sprang across the road, and stood—like some lovely animal at bay—with her back against the low stone wall that edged the road, and her hands clenched upon her bosom. The little red shawl she had worn snood-like on her hair fell back, and the full light of her great indignant eyes—indignant, yet never losing the sadness in their shining depths—blazed full upon him.

"Shame on you—and you an officer and a gentleman—to trate a poor girl so—shame upon you; for a coward, and an ill-conducted craythur at that! All my life I'll be hating the name of ye, an' the thought of ye."

"You look best and handsomest when you are angry," said her tormentor, quietly

watching her as the hunter watches the thing that he has trapped. "I've heard it said there are no eyes like your true Irish grey, and it's true, too; yours are as bright as stars this minute."

"I could curse them that they iver looked on ye," hissed the girl, shrinking as he came a pace nearer. "Do ye know I'm Harry Deacon's awateheart—sacred to him alone of all the world, an' him and I pledged to stand before the holy Praste?"

"I am jealous of this man Deacon," began the other, with calm irony.

"He wears the same colours as yerself, but don't disgrace them so," said Norah, looking round as one who seeks a chance for flight.

The red rose to Captain Ellerton's brow. To be told that you are a disgrace to your regiment is never a pleasant thing, however true it may be; and to be compared, unfavourably too, to a private soldier in your own corps, may be looked upon as decidedly trying.

"If Harry could see what you're after," continued Norah, too mad with rage and fear to be prudent, "he'd lay his hand across your face, and mark it. The saints be wid him every night and day, an' make him strong to do the right."

"You may be glad, then, my girl, that he isn't here," said Ellerton, who, to say the truth, began to wish himself out of an adventure that seemed likely to prove unpleasant. "If he were to strike an officer he would be shot down like a dog, as he has already, if my memory serves me right, been lashed like a dog."

With a bitter moan, and an indescribable gesture of loathing and contempt, she raised her hands to her face, and broke into a low, subdued sobbing, that yet shook her from head to foot, as the wind shakes the slim sapling.

"Hark, now, my girl," said Ellerton, "take a word of friendly counsel: keep a quiet tongue in your head to this Deacon, or he'll get into some trouble or other."

She lifted her face, and looked at him through the rain of her tears.

"Just one kiss more before I go; let us part friends, pretty one."

But he had scarcely uttered the last word, when with a glad cry Norah started forward—"Father—father dear, come to me!"

"I shall—I shall," said a hearty voice, and in a moment the white-haired old Priest of the little church on the hill had scrambled across the ditch with an

agility wonderful in one of his years, Phelim preceding him in one wild bound, and Norah was clinging to the good man's arm, sobbing as if her heart would break.

If Captain Ellerton had wished himself out of an adventure—undertaken more in the spirit of bravado, and the charm of entire novelty, than anything else—awhile ago, goodness only knows where he wished himself now. Yet precipitate flight was out of the question, for the man, though utterly unscrupulous in all that concerned the gratification of his own whims and fancies, was no poltroon.

"Who's frightened ye, then, Norah?" said the Priest, looking keenly and questioningly from one to the other. Then, as the true state of the case dawned upon his mind, he grew white and stern, drawing himself up with a dignity that Captain Ellerton was little prepared to see in one so simple in all outward seeming.

"Sir," said the grave, quiet voice of the old Priest, "I know not who you may be, and I do not seek to know, but this I know—you have been doing an ill work to be after frightening my child here, like this. You are a soldier, sir, as I can see by your bearing, and let me call to your mind that it is a soldier's part to protect women—not to insult them."

Ellerton flashed hotly. Some facts do sound so very unpleasant set forth in plain words. Still, he was determined to carry things off in as pleasant a manner as possible; and, strange to say, felt little or no resentment at the pastor standing by the lamb of his fold. The two formed, indeed, a dramatic and picturesque group that not a little pleased his eye.

Finding that the old man paused for a reply, Ellerton took a step towards him, and assumed a gentle, confidential air.

"Wouldn't you look upon it as what you call a venial sin, good father, to steal a kiss from a pretty girl?"

But the banter and the confidential air were alike lost upon Father John.

"You speak you know not what," he said solemnly; and something in the now bared head and uplifted hand made Ellerton feel ill at ease. He was himself an Irishman, and therefore at heart superstitious. He had the deep implanted dread of what he would have called "the evil eye;" he did not care to have some sort of anathema hurled at his devoted head, just because he had gone philandering in the green lanes after a pretty colleen.

"This child," said Father John, who had been silent awhile, swallowing his ire, "is plighted to one she loves with all her innocent heart—why should you violate the love that should be sacred? Sir, I do not mean to deal harshly with you, or to make a scandal that might end ill for all. I only ask you to go from this, and come no more here; I only ask you to give me your word that this shall be so. Sir?"

The old man's voice was now gentle and pleading, and somewhere, deep down in an undisciplined man's heart, it touched a chord that had been long silent.

"I give you my word," said Ellerton; for the life of him he could not bring his lips to add, "as an officer and a gentleman."

He was sorry in his heart of hearts as he stood there bare-headed before that simple pair, standing hand-in-hand in the opal-tinted gloaming, with Phelim looking up wistfully into their faces, as though hoping for some word of approval from them, that he had done well in seeking aid for his mistress in the hour of her distress.

And so he left them—words of regret upon his lips; words that he had never thought to utter to a simple peasant and a hedge-priest; words that were taken with such a gentle forbearance and courtesy as took away half their sting, and left no rancour of humiliation in his mind.

"Come, Norah," said Father John, laying his hand on the girl's shoulder, as Ellerton's tall figure disappeared round the turn of the road, "and mind ye say an extra Ave to-night; as to Phelim here—he's got the sense of a human creature in him—he told me of your extremity as plain as if he had the gift of tongues—pulling at my coat-tail—where I've a mind to think he's made a bit of a rent, too"—this looking ruefully over his shoulder—"and I cut over the field, him scurrying like mad, an' then I heard your voice, my child, full of distress, and by the help of the Lord, I leapt the ditch as if I'd only twenty years to carry, instead of sixty."

Then the two paced onward towards the shanty by the edge of the wood.

Meanwhile, Alison had found upon her table a small sealed letter. A hot flush coloured her cheek as she gathered it up and carried it to her bedroom.

She knew the hand so well—nay, she knew the tale the letter had to tell. It was signed, "yours faithfully, Hugh Dennison,"

a simple ending, maybe, but Alison knew all that it meant. As she read, the tears fell thick and fast. The writer prayed for delay. He wanted no sudden impulse of denial to have its way.

"Take time to think—weigh well the height and depth and truth of the love I offer"—that was the burden of the song he sang.

Well, she could give that much; she could give him time.

And all through the next day the consciousness of the letter locked in her desk, was with her like a living, haunting presence.

It was practice evening, and in one supreme moment a drama in which three characters—one woman and two men—were concerned, was enacted.

Hugh Dennison, losing hold over himself for an instant, gave one look of passionate entreaty at Alison, and that look was seen by the Colour-Sergeant of number one company—who, seeing it, paled even to the lips that suddenly showed grey under the sweep of the dark moustache, while his eyes, full of a haggard misery, told but too plainly the anguish of his heart.

No one noticed the acting of this drama from life. It passed like a shadow across a glass; but Alison played a false chord, and the doctor, calling a halt, regarded her with mingled reproach and wonder; while Mrs. Musters coughed an aggravating little cough, as who should say, "when I play the harmonium this sort of thing does not happen."

All day the wind had been rising, lashing the trees and bending their branches downwards to the river. Grey scud was hurrying across the sky overhead; and in the fields the cattle huddled under shelter, ready for the rain which they knew was sure to come, but which still held off. The practice was over; the harmonium had given its last groan, the lights in the chapel were out, and Gunner Grimes had turned the key in the lock with an uncompromising air, as of one who owned the whole place, and was answerable to Government for the safety of the entire building.

It was late for her to be out alone; and yet, down by the river, watching its tossing waters with strained and tearless eyes, was Alison Drew. In her pale grey gown she looked a flick of light among the shadows that waved around her. She was not afraid that any one would come after her. If she was missed it would be taken



for granted she had gone to see Patsey. Long since she had secured to herself perfect independence of action, being one of those people who can do a great deal that others cannot. No one questioned her comings and her goings; no one wondered at anything she did. She was feeling the benefit of all this now, for she felt as if she must have stifled had she stayed indoors. Some horrible oppression was over her, some presage of coming ill. Sad indeed are those who dare not read what is written in their own hearts; whose only safety lies in blindness. The wind, ever rising, whistled and screamed, wrestling with the resisting trees; lashing the water so that the white foam flecked the brown.

And in Alison's heart a thousand stinging thoughts rose, and almost stifled her. The voice of the storm found an echo in her own heart.

"What is this that is over me?" she moaned, wringing her hands one in the other, her bonnet blown backwards, her face bared to the buffeting of the soft full blast. "What is holding me so that I cannot get free? Oh, Heaven! guide and help me in this my hour of need!"

The impulse of prayer yielded to is ever calming; some peace stole into Alison's soul, even as the fitful light of a broken moon stole through the rift of a cloud overhead, making a tiny ripple of silver on the tossing water at her feet. Gathering her cloak tightly round her, she set her face homewards; but had scarce reached the low stone wall that edges the high banks that top the river when something very strange happened. A red glow rose and flickered; the staring arms of the trees on the cones of the hills showed black against the blaze of light, and from far away came the sound of a wild song that was like a cry.

#### AMONG THE BLACK MOUNTAINS.

THE person who knows nothing about the Black Mountains except their name may be excused for having a somewhat gloomy idea of them. The idea, however, does them an injustice. They are no more funereal in hue than other mountains. Even in winter, when they may be supposed to be most awe-inspiring, they are white rather than black.

Seen in the fog end of spring, as I saw and made intimate acquaintance with them, these hills are, indeed, a joy to

the susceptible pedestrian. They are then clad with heather, which, at that time of year, is not a very bright sort of vestment; but the glow of the young bracken and the even tenderer colours of the whortleberry plants, to be seen in patches by the acre, quite neutralise the more sombre effect of the heath. You must moreover drape the inner dimples of their sides with silvery cascades, and fill their valleys with verdure of an assorted kind, from buttercupped meadows to hawthorn and walnut trees. Add a sprinkling of white cottages to the valleys, make these melodious with bird music, and set a radiant sun in the cloud-flecked sky, and you may conceive that this little tract of England and Wales has its allurements.

The mountains occupy a corner of three counties—Hereford, Monmouth, and Brecknock. The most ordinary excursion in them, that from Abergavenny to Llanthony, leads you from Monmouth towards Brecknock; nor need it occupy anything like the greater part of a day. And what a memorable little jaunt it is, whether you take it in the hired car, your own phaeton, on a cycle, or with your own unaided legs! The whole area of the Black Mountains may be reckoned up roughly as but about fifteen miles by ten. It may be said to consist of five irregular ridges running north-west from Abergavenny, with five main valleys and innumerable lesser combs. The greatest elevation of the mass seems to be Waunfach, on the Gader Ridge, two thousand six hundred and sixty feet high. But it is not a conspicuous peak. The Ridge just raises a pimple a hundred feet or two above its general summit, and the world has christened the pimple Waunfach. The Sugarloaf, by Abergavenny, though less than two thousand feet high, is much more assuming, seen from the Usk valley, than Waunfach.

I started for my Black Mountain tramp from Brecon, about twenty miles from Abergavenny. It is an unaccountable thing that there is no direct railway down the Usk valley between these towns. The distance is but twenty miles by the road. As I travelled, however, the journey required nearly three hours of railway. It would have been tedious but for a companion, and the very great charm of the wooded mountain sides and valleys at the beginning and end of the journey.

Of my companion, I must really say something. He was, from his own report,



a millionaire. I met him at the Brecon hotel, where he ate fried bacon with his trout. We chanced to breakfast together at an untimely hour, and subsequently to travel together. I had a third-class tourist ticket; but my companion, being a millionaire, troubled himself not at all about tickets and took me with him, first class. He had words to exchange with countless persons at the various stations in the iron district although which we passed. It was about coal one minute, iron the next, then house property; stocks and shares, and other industries filled up the gaps. Between whiler, the worthy fellow, who wore a most desirable diamond on one of his fingers, and a smaller—but also very desirable—jewel in his scarf, told me more of his personal history than I had the right to expect to hear. Forty years ago, he had been a plain mechanic in a railway shed. Now he was what he was—the god of a surprising number of men's admiration, and a member of the Imperial Institute to boot. He told me that having worked hard in the days of his early manhood, he proposed now to enjoy himself without stint. I judge he began to do that a year or two ago. He had lately travelled much in America, and never without a six-shooter. Try as I would, however, I could not induce him to impart to me an adaptable recipe whereby I too might become a millionaire. At a venture, I imagine that land speculations had raised him. He hinted as much when he told how seven years ago, being made guardian to an orphan with two thousand pounds, he invested the sum in land in Cardiff. "Last week, mister," he added sententially, "I parted with that land for that orphan for seventeen thousand pounds." Happy orphan to have had such a guardian! I thought. But I could as little persuade my friend to tell me where the orphan lived—I gathered it was a marriageable young lady—as lead him to give me practical assistance on the high road to wealth. "Now, mind you," said the good gentleman to me at parting, "you're to have a knife and fork with me when you come my way. Just book that, will you?" I did book it, and parted from the millionaire with a feeling of indefinable regret like that left in the mouth after the all-too-brisk dissolution of an expensive caramel.

By the way, I must try a little fried bacon with my next trout. It seems a most profane alliance. But a millionaire is sure

to know what is good. And so I leave the suggestion with the reader.

Then from the hot train—a first class carriage in May is the favoured vehicle of fleas—I walked gladly into the lanes of Llanvihangel, and set my face towards Llanthony. All was peaceful and green and odorous and beautiful. Here I was only on the outskirts of the Black Mountains, but their rounded inoffensive shapes were before me. I was by the River Honddu, a mild brook after so long a drought, with kine bathing themselves in it ankle deep. It behoved me to follow this deep-set little stream, to its confluence with another mountain rivulet under the walls of the monastic retreat of our famous modern Benedictine, Father Ignatius, ten miles away. The prior of New Llanthony has snugly nested himself. A pilgrim must, even in the gay summer time, be well shod and stout of heart to approach the reverend house, knowing that he will have to return thence for his bed. No man, not even a millionaire, could be more stoutly protected against the assaults of the idly curious or the professional scoffer. Of Father Ignatius, however, and his monastery more anon.

The sun was torrid, but a sweet breeze blew down the valley in my face. The old joy of walking under such glorious conditions soon possessed me. I would not for a time have exchanged my feelings for those of a millionaire at their most ecstatic pitch. The mountain shapes little by little enlarged themselves about me, and the glen narrowed. There were hyacinths enough under the hedges, which in their turn were sprayed with crimson and white dog roses and honeysuckle. The walnut trees, whose summits soared to my level from the banks of the Honddu, were of a size rare in England. There were firs and pines in plantations on the hillsides, and the cuckoos sang from them. Bees buzzed around me, and yellow-hammers flitted coquettishly, cock and hen, from hawthorn twig to hawthorn twig, about two yards before me. The heavens were as kind as blue sunlit sky and fleecy clouds could render them. And for three miles I met not one living person. The mellowed pedestrian asks no fairer fortune from Heaven than this.

I passed one slip of a hamlet, Cwmyoy, on the other side of the stream, perilously near, as it seemed, to the broken face of the mountain above it.

But though there were houses and a

church and fly-troubled cattle in the lane leading to the bridge over the Honddu, human inhabitants there seemed none. For this, of course, I cared not. My road was unmistakable. I did not crave the confidences of any garrulous rustic. I did not even thirst for beer or milk. And I knew that, before long, old Llanthony would show itself.

Ere coming to the Abbey, however, I was met by a plaintive man in a cart. He stopped and expressed humble sorrow at being so late. I knew no more than the man in the moon what he meant. But later it appeared that my knickerbockers made him claim me for a certain fisherman whom, with his flies and rods, he ought to have carried up the glen from the railway station an hour back. I sent him on his way, and welcomed the broadening of the valley, which indicated that the old-time abode of the comfort-seeking solitaries was at hand. The mountains nowhere wore a fairer tapestry of clouded and velvety green; nowhere were the meadows so luxuriant, and the blackbirds so tuneful. And there could have been no more delightful contrast with all this warm exuberance than that given by the black yew trees behind which stood up the rugged outline of the broken monastery walls.

A puny post office; a white cottage or two amid the greenery by the brook; a tiny church with decayed beams, which a clerical gentleman and a mechanic were inspecting from a ladder; an inn, and the ruins: these together make up Llanthony.

To be precise, the inn and the ruins are one. Of old the prior had his residence in the modern guesthouse. Kitchen and dining-room nowadays let straight upon the sward, shadowed by the monastic walls. But everything here is of a very unpretentious kind. There was doubtless even on fast days more cheer in the kitchen of the monastery than you will find in the kitchen of the inn. An artist could be seen in an upper room, plying his brush, with his subject before him. An aged man was spudding among the peas and cabbages in the monastery garden. A child rolled on the tombstone of an abbot, and a crowd of reckless poultry strolled hither and thither in quest of worms or grains. These apart, I had the ruins to myself, as I had had the Black Mountains' road. But ere my modest cutlets were cooked, I was joined

by two middle-aged persons from London, who, having pottered about among the stones a little, and stared at the blue sky which domed them, also joined me at the dinner-table. They were not of the common kind of tourists, these two. There was no frivolity and but little enthusiasm in either of them. Over the meat they talked with me in Johnsonian phrases. I imagine their interests were half theological and half mercantile. If you can conceive two mild haberdashers on a preaching tour, you will have an idea of their personality.

But, having lunched, I had no time for mere speculative disquisitions. From the old monastery I meant to proceed to the new—four miles higher up the glen. And afterwards I had to scale the mountains and pass along the broad platform which unites all the ridges of the Black Mountains at their northern end, and so drop as best I could towards Llangorse Lake in the west. It was an ambitious programme, and I might fail to fulfil it, but I proposed to try.

I had walked for another hour, I suppose, always ascending, with a fine pyramidal mountain before me, standing at the meeting place of two ravines from the north, when I heard the tinkle of a church bell. The blackbirds that had erstwhile been carolling seemed to hold their notes until the bell had sung its lay. The effect of this melody in these mountain wilds was exquisite. I stood and listened to it, and dropped my cigarette in the spiritual absorption of the act. Then the bell ceased, the birds continued their chants, and I proceeded on my way. The modern monastery could not but be near.

Yet before I came to it I had to make acquaintance with one more little hamlet—that of Capel-y-ffin. What a sequestered, pretty little spot it occupies. There is an ancient church about as spacious as a rich man's dining-room, low, and with a most unobtrusive bell tower; the whole girdled by jetty yew trees which almost hide from view the leaning tombstones in its burial-ground. The mountains rise on all sides of it, and the Honddu receives its chief tributary by its walls. A few white cottages are scattered up the glen, with fields of clover and buttercups betwixt them and some high old trees where the moisture is most pervasive. The pyramidal mountain already noticed bears a conspicuous cross of stones on its summit and dominates the scene.

Hence to the monastery on the hillside it was but a step or two up the right bank of the Honddu's tributary. A trim wall appeared, with spruce firs hugging it methodically. A stone portal showed itself, capped by a crucifix bearing the word "Pax," inscribed "The Abbot's Gate," and marked with the frigid phrase, "Private Entrance." And looking over the stone wall, I looked upon a well-conditioned garden of pot herbs and vegetables, in which sundry bare-headed young men in black cassocks were toiling gently with their hoes. The high roof of a chapel rose above the garden and a pleasant house was alongside, having a gable, cross-crowned, beneath which a black and white bow-window bulged prettily forwards. The sun shone over all, and the breeze blew freshly from the mountain watershed to the north. Everything seemed saturated with this sweet word "Pax."

Now I knew that this modern reviver in England of an old social and religious habit did not favour the presence of ordinary strangers in his tranquil little domain. The guide-book told me that. Nevertheless, and because I was thirsty—a poor pretext, since the mountains teemed with ice-cold springs—I approached the monastery as bold as a baker delivering his ordered loaves. A blue construction of wood, neatly nailed round, in a pink and yellow meadow, excited my curiosity. But I would not climb the fence to see it at close quarters. I walked on to the chapel door, which was open. At sound of my footsteps a stir arose among the brethren in the garden. They leaned on their hoe handles and looked at me. One, a dark young man, seized a barrow and trundled it upwards so as to arrive at the chapel porch before me. The others stood and watched the issue.

But nothing sensational happened. I saluted the dark young brother, whose finger nails were no blacker than was to be expected, and he avowed that he saw no reason why I might not enter the chapel. It would indeed have been odd if he had. And so I set in the incense-perfumed coolness and looked at the Madonna on the altar, and the red-lilied altar carpet, and the sunlit verdure of the garden. The high altar was screened off, but through the screen its many candles and the burning lamp before it were visible. A few minutes passed thus refreshingly, and the young brother returned to say that any information I required would be afforded me at the

monastery. I have a sad unconscious trick of looking most angelic when really I am but gnawed by curiosity. Hence I imagine this intimation; for why might I not have been a nobleman in mufti, with the monastic instinct ebullient in me?

Then I receded and rang the monastery bell. The door was wide open, so that I might have entered and at least rested in the vestibule, where were chairs, religious pictures, words, and symbols, and shelter from the sun. The monastery dog in his kennel outside did not so much as part his eyelids at me. His nose hung over the threshold of his house, and he seemed to be dreaming blissfully. I rang again and yet again. Then, with youthful impetuosity, Father Ignatius himself appeared, greeted me, insisted that I should be refreshed, and departed; to be succeeded in two or three minutes by one of the cassocked young men, who promptly shut the door and held formal converse with me through a grating about two inches by two. He had yellow teeth, that is all I can tell of him. His enquiries were such as might have been expected. Whence came I? whither went I? and wherefore did I appear at the monastery? Three little rustic urchins trooped round with school-books, and I heard the genial voice of the prior cry to them: "Good-bye, dear boys." Another young man in a cassock followed the boys, and expressed himself willing to be my guide until the tea hour, when, it was hoped, I would be their guest.

But alas! I could not tarry for tea. Nothing would have given me greater pleasure. I have eaten snails and drunk wine with Greek monks; and have been stroked on the head by an attenuated Italian devoted to a life of mortification and begging for "centesimi." I would dearly have liked to see how these young Englishmen carried themselves in community; but I had many miles before me ere I could consider my day's walk at an end, and it was already past four o'clock.

My new guide therefore took me hurriedly into the pilgrims' refectory, where I was regaled with limejuice; thence into the visitors' parlour—a bright room with books, portraits of Her Majesty, writing materials, and pictures, but with no view from it—and then, having peeped at the corridor of cubicles for downright pilgrims, we descended into the open. The books in the visitors' room were not all mere spiritual "pabulum." There were novels among them with well-frayed edges.

And so we walked towards the outer track together. The blue woodwork in the meadow thus came into view again.

"What is it," I asked, "a tomb, or what?"

"Not a tomb! We want no graves here. One does not die at Llanthony," was the reply.

I apologised for my curiosity, but made no attempt to control it.

"Oh, it is," said my guide at length, "the place of the apparition. That was before my time. When there is money enough, something more suitable will be substituted for it."

"Our Lady of Llanthony" may by-and-by therefore become an accredited wonder-working cult in the Black Mountains.

At the outer gate I parted with my kindly cicerone and made for the heights. The chapel bell tinkled again, this time but faintly, for the wind carried its music away from me.

In a few minutes I caught up the three little urchins who had been to afternoon school at the monastery. They had nothing but good words to say of the "reverend father's" treatment of them; nor can aught save the old Adam of human nature—perhaps in the shape of a liquor-loving sire—be held accountable for the gleeful remark of the oldest of them when I gave them a penny apiece: "It'll get us two glasses of beer!" On consideration, the child thought that either toffee or a "good book" might be better for his soul's salvation than home-brewed ale.

It was past five o'clock, and I still had ten rough miles to travel, the greater part aided by compass and sun alone. They were gloriously bracing miles. From the monastery level (about one thousand one hundred feet above the sea), I ascended gradually the plateau whence the mountains fall in parallel ridges to the south and in abrupt terraces to the north. I had the heathery upland to myself. Here and there were sheep and ponies; naught else. From the summit of the plateau (some two thousand feet up), the Wye valley broke into view, the gleaming thread of the river bounded on the other side by hills above hills to the horizon.

Hence, shortly, the angular peaks of the Brecon Beacons were visible in the west. They served as my guide, for the Lake of Llangorse lies between them and the Black Mountains. I hit the right slope for my purpose. "Y Crib" it is called, which, being interpreted, means "the

edge." From no standpoint could I have had a finer retrospect of the general character of the mountains I had done with. Y Crib is a long narrow mountain promontory, dropping sharply to the cultivated land at the base of the hills. There was something of grandeur in the dark coombes on either hand, with the pencilling of bright green where spring water gushed from the mountain sides. There is a Castell Dinas at the extremity of Y Crib. The remains of the citadel still stand and guard the pass, which is now merely a highway from one village to another.

At eight o'clock I was still trudging towards my bourne, though with lessened enthusiasm. It seemed to me that Llangorse village would never be reached. The glitter of the lake had shown in the bottom of the valley twice or thrice, and then disappeared. I passed from lane to lane, ever descending, and ever with the Brecon Beacons before me. One of these lanes was more remarkable than the rest. It was exceedingly narrow, and steep, and rough—a mere cow path, in fact; but the trees grew entirely across it, and the banks on either hand were as full of ferns as if a collector had purchased the domain and planted it at his pleasure. It was like a lane of the tropics for its beauty, though less luxuriant. The invigorating coolness and damp of it were, however, emphatically English sensations. A crimson flicker of the sunset shone through the canopy of its leaves, for one moment transfiguring it and myself.

A few minutes later I was in Llangorse village, and the children playing before the church and bestriding the brook bridge briefly suspended their antics to stare at the apparition of a stranger. But the "Red Lion Inn" received me in its prim little parlour and hid me from their sight; and old Amor, that famous fisherman of Llangorse, came forward in his time-stained velveteens to say that the morrow would be a capital day for fishing the lake with him—in one of his boats.

## BURIED TREASURE.

A PIRATE YARN UP TO DATE.

"WHAT!" cried the seedy stranger; "you don't believe in buried treasure? Wall, I swar! Ain't such things? Cost more to find than they're worth! Why, the greatest stake I ever played was for buried treasure.

"Where shall I begin, now—let's see.



Wall, I was in love—right in up to the neck. She was a nurse in the hospital. I was a useless orphan gump, with a thousand a year of my own. Says Alick, 'I'm a pro in this here hospital, earning twenty dollars a year. What are you?' 'Three saloons,' says I—'livery stable, and mortgage on the First Baptist Church.' 'What d'ye do?' says she. 'Hang around,' says I. 'Then don't hang around me,' says she. Tell you that was a sickener. However, I tried again the next year. Says Alick, 'I'm a staff nurse in this here hospital and boss of the surgical ward. What are you?' 'I love you,' says I. 'Well,' says she, 'staff nurses ain't to be had at the price. Sheer off; go and do something.' I just went around back streets, and kicked myself home.'

"That night I was packing up to go West, when I came across a sheaf of Pa's old letters, and began to burn 'em one at a time in the stove. Presently I lit on a document writ by my grandmother Saphira Burns, 'being a narrative dictated by my husband, Zachariah P. Burns, of Millatoneville, Connecticut, a retired pirate, late deceased, having been run over and killed by an omnibus in New York, and lyeth in Greenwood Cemetery, for which the said omnibus company disclaimeth liability, having been intoxicated, and now waiteth in confident expectance of a glorious hereafter. Given under my hand.'

"Well, you bet, I pricked up my ears, 'specially when I seen that the whole bloomin' yarn was about a buried treasure. Grandpa Zachariah must have been a double-barrelled terror. Why, at nineteen, being third mate of a whaler, he mutinied; made his own cousin by marriage, Captain Eliphalet W. Stigga, walk the plank; swore in the crew over a Russian almanack and a bloody dagger; hoisted the black flag; and started in business as a buccaneer. At first he scuttled coasters in a small way along the Chilanean coast; afterwards, when he had lost his ship on the Gallipagoes, took to annexing whalers when they put in for water. Altogether, what with marooning, ransoms, and deep-sea captures, he was making a pretty good stake, when, as luck would have it, trade slackened, money got tight, dividends down to nothing—in short, the crew got up on their ear and mutinied.

"When the ringleaders found Zach, he was sitting in the middle of the cabin on a barrel of gunpowder, armed with dozens

of pistols. They told him to come down off that barrel.

"'I'll be hanged if I do,' says Zach.

"'That's so,' said the ringleader, who was a truthful man.

"'Now,' says Zach, 'I'm bossing this show. You're going to head her for Panama—nor-nor-east-b'-east—and if you ain't dropped anchor by seven bells of the morning watch, I'll blow her up by George, and this time to-morrow you'll be arranging for your lodgings down below!'

"Yes, sir, compass in the beams overhead, water and food within reach; why he'd got the dead bulge on the whole outfit! The crew chuckled on deck, thinking how they'd carve up Zach when he started for to go ashore; and Zachariah chuckled in the cabin, for when they anchored at Panama Bay he wouldn't quit his barrel unless the new Captain was given up to him as hostage, till such time as he reached the dry land.

"With a pistol in each of the leader's ears he marched up on deck, and went down into the boat. While all the crew hung gaping over the bulwarks, while a slow match fizzed in the cabin, Zachariah P. Burns went safely ashore with his hostage. Yes, there he stood on the beach till the new Captain went back aboard, saw him welcomed by the crew on deck, saw the boat hauled up—then bang went the ship, and for some minutes the air was plumb full of hurtling scraps of pirate. Zachariah remembered that he was a Connecticut man, and felt quite pleased with Connecticut.

"Ever hear of Lafitte—the Pirate of the Gulf? No? Then you'd oughter. Zach found him at Colon, anyway, outfitting for the fall trade; joined on, shipped as his second mate; and I tell you they made things hum in the Mexican Gulf! Business was booming; why they got so proud that when they spent a Sunday afternoon shark-fishing, nothing would satisfy 'em for bait but live Jesuit missionaries! Mind you, Lafitte was dead nuts on theology—listen by the hour to any sky pilot as happened along—but as he said, 'Romans is pizen!'

"Well, during the war of 1812, old man Zachariah must needs fall out with Lafitte. British General—Pakenham his name was—wanted the Captain to come along and help capture New Orleans. Zach's eyes fairly glittered when he thought of all the loot.

"'It's a great scheme!' says he.



" 'Won't work, Zach,' says Lafitte, 'the bloomin' Britisher's jolly well going to get licked. I'm going to turn patriot and help give him beans. I'm after a free pardon from the Yanks—you bet.' "

" 'Patriotism be blowed!' says Zachariah. "

" On the way to New Orleans they had to put in for water at the Bayou Teche. Soon as they dropped anchor, and the people were away with the water breakers, Captain Lafitte calls away the jolly-boat and starts out with Zachariah and two ordinary seamen on a little picnic. After some miles they pulled over to an island, where they spent the whole night landing a thundering big iron chest full of gold and jewels. Enough to make your mouth water: chalices and crucibles, patens without end, snuff-boxes, chains of rolled gold, with eighteen carat fixings, earrings, necklets, tararas, dimonds, candlesticks—and—etc. Buried it in the beach—yes, of course above high water mark, smoothed the place over, and murdered the ordinary seamen—which had been selected as the two most useless men aboard. "

" 'Now,' says Lafitte, 'we can go on to New Orleans with a clear conscience.' "

" Next morning when they were about a mile or so at sea, the Captain sent Zachariah aloft to do some kind of monkey business with the fore royal yard-arm. When Zach got to the place, he found the foot rope cut neatly away at the outer end till it hung by a thread. 'I see,' says Zachariah. "

" Now you must understand that they were in a shallow bay, about a mile and a half out, a big eddy swirling along-shore. While Zach was taking it all in, the Captain sung out: "

" 'You goin' to stay there all day? Why don't you get a hump on, you darned old wreck of a purser's pig—you brass-mounted, brazen-headed jackass—you—!—!—! ' "

" 'Ay, ay, keep your shirt on, governor!' so saying Zach stepped on the foot rope. "

" 'Man overboard!' yelled the Captain. Zach came down with an awful smack in the water. The sly old fox! While Lafitte lay to lowering away the boats, Zachariah let himself float gently with the current till they could barely see where he was. Then, kicking off his sea boots, he suddenly let out a piercing yell, waved his arms like a windmill, and sank. He was never seen again from the pirate ship. "

" Drowned! Drowned nothin'! He was "

simply swimming under water, putting up his nose when he needed a sniff of air. In half an hour he landed at the point of the bay, hauled ashore like a seal, and hung himself out to dry. Lafitte had called in the boats and squared away for New Orleans. "

" 'Nothing like trusting your friends,' says Zachariah. "

" Dig up the treasure? No; went straight to Mobile, Alabama. There, while he was hiring a sloop to carry the spoil away, the old man must needs fall in love. The lady was young, pretty, widow, four hundred a year—married within a month, and off to New York for the honeymoon. "

" Happily ever after? No, he was run over and killed by an omnibus. "

" No omnibuses then? Well, tell the story yourself! Then shut up! There—gone—alams the door, of course—and a good riddance. "

" Lafitte? Ran the Britishers out of New Orleans—free pardon from Legislature and a vote of thanks—got religion, and went into the slave trade. "

" Treasure? Now if it had been pork and molasses, I guess—well, he'd have done well in the corner grocery line; but diamonds and jewels—no. I guess, stranger, that down in Louisiana swamps they're hungering more after religion and quinine than any earthly gauds. "

" Dead and gone this long time? Yes. Lafitte lived at his island years and years. Nights he used to go down with a spade and lantern, dig up the treasure, gloat awhile, say his prayers to it, and bury it in again. Never fed himself—couldn't afford it. They say he died of want. "

" But his ghost keeps up the old regular habits. Yes, sir, every night regular comes down the beach—tall, thin, clammy, with lantern and shovel—to dig there for hours in the sand. You don't believe? Wall, now I do, for I've seen him! "

" Yes, you're right. I took Grandma Saphira's document, Zachariah's map, the proceeds of my three saloons, mortgage, and livery stable, and started out within a week for Louisiana. Not that I believed in the treasure. No, but with a broken heart one must hustle around and do something, or there's danger of what'd'ye-callum setting in. So at Mobile, Alabama, I chartered a sloop and started out with two hired men, fishing. Yes, camped on an island near the Bayou Teche, and fished. Talk—talk—talk—I thought those two idiots would never quit jawing. "

Why, it was nearly midnight before they curled up in their blankets; but at last they talked themselves to sleep. My chance was come. I stole away, crossed the island, then followed along the shore till I found my bearings. Dark as a coyote's throat. I could just make out the two rocks up by the timber, when suddenly the moon broke out, and, as I live, there was a man—a tall, dark man—with a lantern and spade digging!

"My teeth rattled. I was perspiring like a pitcher of iced lemonade. I was gone in the knees, something horrible crawling down my back. For there he was, with a face like a death's head and bony hands, digging away in the sand, as though he'd never come to the bottom. At last he struck the chest. I could hear the cling of his shovel on the lid. He heaved up the top, rummaged around, took something out, which he wrapped in what looked like a shroud. Then the great lid came down with a clang. I could stand no more, but lit out along the beach like all possessed, and crawled back, limp as a rag, to camp.

"Next day I let my men into the secret, for I was ready to share up now, if only for the sake of human company. Moike said:

"It's all my oi. Oi'm an American citizen. Can't take me in wid ghosts avould wives' tales, begorra!"

"As to Hans, he'd have no truck mit der teufel. Nod much—no.

"Howbeit, for five hundred dollars apiece they helped me out, seeing that I was a friend. We waited till eleven o'clock, liquored up, and crossed over to the place. Yes, there he was, digging, just as I'd seen before. We watched him open the chest and take something out. Again the great heavy top of the chest came down with a clang. Then we waited till the sand was filled in, and the ghost stole back to the woods. 'Now,' says I, 'is all this granny's tales?' There wasn't a word from the Irishman, for he'd skipped the country; but the Dutchman lay grovelling. 'Der teufel!' he yelled. 'dake me home.'

"I couldn't stand it. The whole thing was a regular swindle. This treasure—mine by rights—was being stolen away piecemeal night after night by a pirate's ghost. I dragged the Dutchman up, shook him, and filled him with whisky. We came down out of the woods with a whoop and a yell; we dug up the sand with our

nails; we lifted the heavy chest out of its hole, and had started to drag it away, when a voice rang out of the woods that knocked me cold:

"Say, there, what in thunder are you doing with my meat safe? Can't a man bury his food away from a tropical sun without being plundered by white trash? Hands up, you idiots, or I'll shoot!"

#### OUR LADIES' CLUB.

"THERE is nothing new under the sun!" So we northerners were constrained sorrowfully to admit when we found that our Club, which we had fondly imagined to be thoroughly "fin-de-siècle," had been forestalled, certainly in America, probably, too, in London and the larger English cities.

A good many seasons ago now it was, that a batch of us—all girls fresh from school, and fired with the thought of becoming world-famed painters—joined together throughout a whole summer in order to go on various sketching expeditions. I cannot say that we all made great progress in our art; but undoubtedly some of us did, and the rest of us made up for our lack of talent by a plentiful reserve of high spirits and healthy appetites. My own particular chum, I remember, had a knack of turning everything into sunshine. No matter how the clouds might be lowering overhead, her skies were always blue; and the number of sixpences she must have expended on tubes of cobalt, ultramarine, and cerulean blue, is quite frightful to contemplate.

For my part, I shall never forget the tussle I had that summer with a stream called the Corbie. Bent upon business, I had pitched my camp on a flat rock right in the middle of the running water. It was just above the bit known as the Lynn, at which the Corbie, hemmed in on either side by steep banks, collects its forces and takes sundry bounds down make-believe cataracts with a very creditable boom and rush. With my folding-easel firmly fixed in tufts of grass, I faced directly down stream, and set myself to transfer these pigmy falls to my canvas. But to my utter astonishment I found myself compelled to make the water, instead of flowing down, flow up my picture from bottom to top; and although in my own opinion I succeeded in overcoming this tremendous difficulty and reproducing the

scene with singular fidelity, no one to whom I ever showed the painting could be induced to see it in its proper light. "It is very nice," they would say politely, "but of course the water here"—pointing to the top of the canvas—"is certainly above the water down there;" and any attempts at explanation on my part seemed only to have the effect of bewildering them. I discovered later on, of course, on applying to the proper authorities, that the task to which I had set myself was an impossible one; and that not all the King's horses nor all the King's men—that is to say, not all the Royal Academicians and their Associates put together—could have tackled successfully that stream from that point of view. But I have always dated from that period the decadence of my enthusiasm for the artist's career.

However, it was the members of this sketching party of which I have been speaking who were to form the nucleus of our Ladies' Club.

Winter came and rough weather, and sketching had now become out of the question. How then were these young geniuses to pursue untrammelled their serious studies? The idea of hiring a studio was mooted, but before it had even been fairly considered there flashed from some one intellect—I am bound to say that I believe it to have been an unconcerned, masculine one—the brilliant suggestion, why not a Ladies' Club? Immediately half-a-dozen young minds were busy with the ways and means, the absolutely necessary, the possibly to be done without. You must remember that the whole scheme was to us entirely new. If the Women's University Club was in New Bond Street then, we did not know it; if the Somerville already existed, its fame had not reached our northern habitations. We were enabled thus to give full play to our inventive faculties, so long at least as our plans kept within the limits of our by no means too long purses.

It was speedily decided that we must have a studio and a reading-room, that the annual subscription should not exceed one guinea, and that the election of a Lady President (our tender years taken into account) was absolutely indispensable. Behold us, then, discussing the merits of all the likely matrons in our native town, regardless of the consideration as to whether they would or would not take gladly the exalted position to which we contemplated raising them.

I have often thought that the lady on whom our choice eventually fell was the one of all others best fitted to make our Club the success it became. Of a distinctly intellectual turn of mind, brimful of energy, delighting in the society of young people in the absence of any family of her own, she espoused our cause with ready enthusiasm. Almost immediately we had enrolled a sufficient number of prospective members to ensure our solvency; had taken rooms at a rental of fourteen pounds a year, purchased a square of carpet, some chairs, and small tables, and last, but not least, a stamp with a lever handle to enable us to date triumphantly our letters and envelopes from the Ladies' Club—a piece of plant which had been our dream and our desire since first the great project was set on foot—and had applied ourselves to making our quarters inhabitable.

Never shall I forget our first steps in this direction. By way of being economical, we had determined to stain the floors ourselves; but oh! the weary, back-breaking tedium of the process. From morn till dewy eve, with all the energy of despair, did we poor geniuses wield the great brushes prescribed for the occasion; and even then but half of our heavy task was done. I remember that my right hand looked exactly double the size of my left one, and that I crept homewards in such a manner as to suggest that I was suffering from a violent attack of lumbago. My companions, I have no doubt, were in precisely the same condition. What wonder, then, if, after all that, we threw economy to the winds and called in a painter to do the varnishing.

For the rest, the furnishing of the rooms was very simple. We, the promoters, supplied all deficiencies in loans from our own homes. Rugs and table-covers, fenders and curtains, all the little odds and ends necessary for our purpose took their places as if by magic in the Club premises. I must mention that we had secured the second (which was also the top) floor of a medium-sized corner house, that our studio, with its northern exposure and its large skylight, as well as other windows, was, and is, the admiration and envy of our local artists; and that, in addition to a capacious reading-room, we were fortunate enough to have got a very decent-sized cloak-room at the head of the stairs; from all which it may be deduced that rents in our favoured city are not unnecessarily

high. By the generosity of our President, a box capable of holding one bagful of coals was fitted into the angle of the staircase, and thus we were completely equipped for our winter's work.

But here exactly came in the humour of the situation. With us, work meant play; but for our President work was work. Her husband, by sheer force of brain power, had made for himself a name of European celebrity, and it was not likely that the wife of this great philosopher would be deceived as to the true nature of the dawdling in which we indulged. Nor was she. Before we knew what we were about we were plunged into all manner of head work which she, to all appearance, took it for granted we had originally intended carrying on in our reading-room, but of which we had, of course, not for a moment dreamt until she suggested it. Instead, therefore, of spending our intervals from home duties and studio work in a pleasant gossip by our Club fireside, with an occasional skip through the room by way of exercise, here were we bound willy-nilly to read, and, more formidable still, to write essays for our mutual benefit.

Poor dear Lady President! Death alone it was that severed the bonds which united her in all affection with her Club members. Not for long after this first start did she confess to me that through it all there had been no misunderstanding on her part, but that in the midst of much private amusement she had taken the course which she thought best for all of us, and had succeeded in hoodwinking us completely by her manner of doing it.

It would be impossible for me here to enter into anything like a detailed account of our Club's history and achievements from these, its primitive beginnings, up to the present day. That its successful undertakings have been so many and so varied is due, I think, chiefly to the fact that we of the committee have made a point always of welcoming suggestions from general members, and of insisting at the same time that the originator of each scheme shall also be its organizer. Thus we have had innumerable reading societies—Shakespeare, Browning, Keats, and so forth—carried on by genuine admirers of the writers under consideration; permanent German and Italian classes, at which most of the plays of Goethe and Schiller, and much of Dante, Tasso, and Petrarch, have been read and discussed—the more accomplished linguists amongst us being ever

ready to give explanations to, and help on generally, their weaker sisters; a Club story, each chapter of which was written by a different member, and some numbers of a Club magazine in beautiful type-writing, more than one article from which has found a place also in the better known periodicals of the great world.

Yes, since the day on which our Lady President started us with Tennyson's "Becket," causing slips of paper, inscribed each with the name of some character in the play, to be shaken together in a tea cosy and drawn out one by one by us poor victims, to be appropriated and made the subject of a descriptive and critical essay, our Club has seen no end of amusing experiments. One winter, I remember, we had debates, in one of which it was my fortune to defend Fashionable as against Rational Dress. Arguments from published sources I could get none; for, although I sought out innumerable articles about fashion in old magazines, the writers one and all descanted solely upon its follies. However, I pulled through somehow or other with my written paper; tracing, so far as I remember, the French Revolution of '48 to Louis Philippe's personal renunciation of fashionable clothes; hinting mysteriously at the necessity of keeping abreast of the spirit of the age; and pointing back to an Exhibition of the Rational Dress Society (which had been held previously in London) as a collection of the most hideous travesties of human coverings ever witnessed by woman. Of course, as soon as they got at me in debate, my opponents transixed me with their arrows of high heels and tight lacing. For the name of the good sense of our Club members, however, I must add that though beaten in the theory I was backed by a large majority when we came to voter.

One of the great attractions of our Club, for many seasons back, has been the list of lectures by well-known personages which, autumn by autumn, we have been enabled to announce to our members as part of the programme for the coming winter. We have the great advantage here of living in a University town; and, through friendship for some one or other of our numbers, the College luminaries have again and again, with the utmost kindness, climbed up our humble stairs to hold forth on whatever interesting theme happened at the moment to be specially occupying their attention. Many times have been heard first within these walls of



ours, theories and dissertations destined to be taken up and hotly discussed later on by the London critics; and not seldom has it happened that a known writer's proof-sheets have, in his own unavoidable absence, been brought over and read to us by his wife—quite possibly one of ourselves.

But I must not conclude this summary of our Ladies' Club without adding some words as to its festive and hospitable side. As might be expected of such an institution, our staple form of refreshment is tea; but there are occasions in which we launch forth into much more ambitious entertainments. For one never-to-be-forgotten evening some years ago, we even went so far as to hire a hall to give a dance; but although it was declared a great success, and the artists, on account of the dainty hand-painted programmes and cunning little buttonholes of sweet violets affixed thereto, were lauded to the skies, we have, I must allow, never again summoned sufficient energy to repeat that experience. However, we do still give annual receptions, always two in succession, and at these the duty of entertaining our guests is invariably relegated to the members of our Club Dramatic Society. For, look for a moment at the changes in the Club interior. No partition wall divides now the reading-room from the studio, only a heavy curtain; and when you have drawn that aside, instead of the paraphernalia of the painter, a gently sloping stage platform and a row of footlight reflectors present themselves to your wondering eyes. A straggling easel may here and there be detected, ignominiously shoved into a corner; but to-day the air of the place is, without doubt, distinctly theatrical. And the artists? The Rosa Bonheurs, the Mrs. Butlers of the future? *Mutatis mutandis*, their thoughts are now chiefly of Mrs. Siddons and Fanny Kemble!

### THE CORINTH CANAL.

It is some three hundred years since Sir Thomas Browne, of Norwich, wrote these characteristic sentences: "The proverb 'to cut an Isthmus'—*Isthmum perfodere*—to take great pains and effect nothing, is by Erasmus applied unto several (attempts), as that undertaking of Cnidians to cut their Isthmus, but especially that of Corinth, so

unsuccessfully attempted by many Emperors. The Cnidians were deterred by the peremptory dissuasion of Apollo, plainly commanding them to desist; for if God had thought it fit he would have made that country an Island at first. But this, perhaps, will not be thought a reasonable discouragement unto the activity of those spirits which endeavour to advantage Nature by Art, and upon good grounds to promote any part of the Universe; nor will the ill success of some be made a sufficient deterrent unto others, who know that many learned men affirm that Islands were not from the beginning; that many have been made since by Art; that some Isthmes have been eat by the sea and others cut by the spade; and if policy would permit, that of Panama in America were most worthy the attempt—it being but a few miles over, and would open a shorter cut unto the East Indies and China."

It is sufficiently remarkable that three hundred years after this was written we should just have witnessed the disastrous failure to cut the Isthmus of Panama, and the successful cutting of the Isthmus of Corinth—the one regarded by the good doctor of physic in Norwich as feasible, "if policy would permit," and the other said to have been disapproved by Apollo, after successive failures by "many Emperors." It is odd, too, that Apollo's objection was precisely that urged by a great cleric when a proposal was made to King Philip of Spain to cut a waterway across Panama.

In this connection, too, it is interesting to recall what old Sir Thomas Browne—who combined erudition with sound common-sense on most occasions—wrote about an Egyptian canal: "It is commonly conceived that divers Princes have attempted to cut the Isthmus or tract of land which parteth the Arabian and Mediterranean Sea; but upon inquiry I find some difficulty concerning the place attempted—many with good authority affirming that the intent was not immediately to unite these seas, but to make a navigable channel between the Red Sea and the Nile, the marks whereof are extant to this day. It was first attempted by Sesostris, after by Darius, and in a fear to drown the country, deserted by them both, but was long after re-attempted and in some measure effected by Philadelphus. And so the Grand Signior, who is Lord of the Country, conveyeth his Gallies into the Red Sea by the Nile; for he bringeth

them down to Grand Cairo, where they are taken in pieces, carried upon camels' backs, and rejoined together at Sues, his port and naval station for that sea, whereby in effect he acts the design of Cleopatra, who after the battle of Actium in a different way would have conveyed her Galleys into the Red Sea."

Yet the Suez Canal is a well-established fact. It was made without flooding the country, it is one of the most commercially successful of modern engineering feats, and by it the "Gallies" of all nations pass day after day from sea to sea in never-ceasing processions.

On the Isthmus of Panama, again, there is now nothing but a rapidly filling-up ditch, some rusting machinery and upturned waggons, a few untenanted buildings, and a densely populated graveyard, to show for the last ambitious attempt of France at canalisation.

The Corinth Canal is not to be compared, either from a mechanical or from a commercial point of view, with either of these undertakings, but it is a very interesting achievement, and while its completion signalises another triumph in engineering, its history has also been associated with French financial disasters.

Corinth, of course, as every schoolboy knows, is an ancient Grecian city, the capital of a rich district of Peloponesus, which was captured by the Romans and destroyed in the second century before Christ. In the first century of the Christian era it emerged as a Roman colony, and began to regain some of its former wealth and luxury, but to-day little remains of its former glories save the ruins of a temple. A small and unimportant modern town now bears the name of the mighty ancient city. The neck of land which connects the Morea with the major portion of the modern kingdom of Greece is the Isthmus of Corinth, which until now has separated the waters of the Gulf of Lepanto—or the Gulf of Corinth, as it is also called—from those of the Ægean Sea, or more strictly speaking, of the Saronic Gulf.

Eighteen centuries ago, when Corinth was made a Roman colony, the attempt was made to cut this isthmus—an attempt, as Sir Thomas Browne says, repeated by many Emperors. But although an actual cutting was begun in the first century on almost the exact line of the canal which has just been completed, the first design is several hundred years older. Indeed, it would seem that six hundred years before

Christ, Periander entertained the idea, which in subsequent centuries found favour in turn with Julius Cæsar, Caligula, Nero, Adrian, and other Roman Emperors. Periander, surnamed the Tyrant, was one of the Seven Wise Men of Greece, and he was wise enough to see the advantage that would be gained to the shipping of Corinth by avoiding the long detour round the peninsula. How far he tried to carry his idea into practice is not now known; but three centuries later Demetrius Poliorcetes took it up—and left it.

Then when Julius Cæsar came to Greece, he saw both the strategical and commercial value of the site of Corinth—as a naval and military station, and as a place of commerce. He set to work to rebuild the city, to restore the port, and to form a colony. He also took up the unfinished work of Demetrius, and had he lived would probably have completed the Canal. The project slumbered after his death, but was revived first by Caligula and then by Nero. Indeed, it has sometimes, though inaccurately, been said that the first really practical attempt by the Romans to cut the Isthmus was under Nero. At any rate, whatever was begun in his reign was soon abandoned.

Thus for eighteen hundred years the project has slept, with occasional dreams of renewing the attempt, and it is not the least interesting incident in the history of the Canal that the shafts sunk by Nero so long ago were found of material advantage in disclosing the nature of the strata to the workers in the nineteenth century. We believe that some of these shafts have been actually utilised during the progress of the work.

The modern enterprise is credited to the Hungarian General Turr, whose name has been associated with many large works, including the first project of the Panama Canal, and in 1881 he obtained from the Greek Government a concession to build the Canal, and Messrs. Gerster and Kander undertook the engineering. They calculated that some ten million cubic metres of earth would have to be removed and deported, and on this basis they estimated the entire cost at thirty million francs, say one million two hundred thousand pounds.

The patriotism of Greece was fired, and the capital asked for was subscribed five times over. But the undertaking was not so simple as a casual glance at the map might lead one to suppose. The Isthmus,

it is true, is less than four miles, say three and three-quarter miles, in width at the line of section, and it is tolerably level on each shore. But it rises to a hump some two or three hundred feet high in the centre, and this hump had to be removed, while also a port and harbour had to be built at each end.

The first sod was cut by the King of Greece in April, 1882, and the work thus begun was expected to be completed within five years. But in the beginning of 1888 the thirty million francs were spent, and the Canal was still a long way from being finished. Thereupon a fresh issue of capital was authorised — other thirty millions in shares of five hundred francs each, bearing six per cent. interest. It seems the fate of all canal enterprises to be attacked by financial embarrassments, for somehow everything always turns out more costly than the promoters anticipate. With the additional capital obtained it was decided to increase the width of the Canal, and to make some further alterations in the plans.

The work for a time went steadily on, with only the occasional interruption of a feast-day or an earthquake. Some fifteen hundred men were pretty constantly employed, and the Government, after an enquiry into the difficulties of construction that had caused the delay, extended the time of the concession till November, 1891.

At the end of 1888 all seemed to promise well, and such progress was being made that completion within the stipulated period, and for the increased capital cost of sixty million francs, was confidently anticipated. But in the spring of 1889 came financial disaster. The work of constructing the Canal had been allotted by the concessionaires, the Corinth Canal Company, to a French "Société pour la Construction." The Canal Company was also French, and became involved in the general financial wreckage which attended the crisis in Paris, when the Comptoir d'Escompte and other financial institutions went over like ninepins. The Canal Company could not meet its obligations, and the "Société pour la Construction" seized upon the property in satisfaction of a claim for one million francs. Thereupon work was suspended, and the next act of the drama was in a Court of Law.

The law moves slowly, and it was not until the spring of 1890 that the Civil Tribunal of Paris finally ordered the dissolution, under a liquidator, of the unfor-

tunate Canal Company. But in the meantime diplomacy had been at work, and M. Tricoupis, the Greek Premier, succeeded in carrying through an agreement between the Greek Government, a French banker, and an engineer, for redeeming the Canal from the bankrupt Company. Thereafter a Greek Company was formed, and a Bill was passed through the Greek Chambers transferring the concessions and privileges to the new Company, with a share capital of five million francs and borrowing powers for fifteen million francs. This fresh capital was needed for the completion of the works—an extension of three years being also granted by the Chambers—and not to recompense the original unfortunate adventurers, whose rights were declared forfeited by their failure to fulfil the terms of the concession.

The new Greek Company let out the work to French and Italian contractors. At that time some three and a half million cubic metres remained to be excavated, and engineers expressed doubts of the practicability of doing it within the stipulated time. But a Greek Company had a better chance of consideration in this matter than a foreign Company, and at their annual meeting in September last year, held in Athens, the shareholders were assured that if the Canal was not open by the appointed time, the twenty-second of March, 1893, it would certainly be open before their next annual meeting. And, unlike the promises of the directors of the Panama Canal Company, this promise has been fulfilled.

The Corinth Canal, the dream of centuries, became an accomplished fact on the sixth of August last, on which day it was formally opened by the King and Queen of Greece, with great ceremony and much rejoicing. With a pair of golden scissors the Queen cut a silken cord stretched across the entrance, and then the Royal yacht, followed by a flotilla of torpedo-boats commanded by Prince George, passed into the waterway. The procession was brought up by English, Greek, and Russian men-of-war, and a perfect fleet of yachts of all nations, and steamers with excursion parties. How the shades of the old Greek warriors and Roman colonists must have gasped with amazement!

Such is the history of this interesting enterprise, for the completion of which the credit largely belongs to M. Matsas, the Greek engineer for the Greek Company. It has taken rather more than eleven years

to make, including the stoppage from financial causes. The following are its dimensions. Length of cutting, three and one-third miles; width at bottom, seventy-two feet; depth, twenty-seven feet; width at surface, eighty-two feet.

To get through the central high land cutting had to be made through rock to a depth of two hundred and eighty feet, with immense labour and cost. The waterway itself is almost straight, running in a north-westerly direction, but it is not wide enough for vessels of any size to pass each other, and no sidings seem to have been provided as in the Suez Canal. There are no locks, and the sea flows through at the rate of two or three miles an hour.

At the Corinth entrance are two moles, affording protection and a passage about one hundred and fifty yards wide, and here has been founded the new town of Poseidonia.

At the other end the entrance is protected by a single curved breakwater, and here has been founded the new town of Isthmia.

For about three-fourths of its length the banks of the Canal are faced with solid masonry, with a road along each bank. Throughout its length are placed electric lamps on both sides, at intervals of three hundred yards.

One of the first persons to use the Canal as a through-passage was the Empress Frederick of Germany, who, in returning from a visit to Athens, came through the new waterway to Trieste.

What, then, of the future of this undertaking? It will not revolutionise the trade of the world as the Suez Canal did, and as the Panama Canal was expected to do, but it will doubtless give a tremendous impetus to the trade of the Levant. Next to Greece, perhaps, the country that will derive most benefit will be Austria, but all Europe should derive some advantage from this new pathway of commerce. It will shorten by some two hundred and fifty miles the voyage from Malta, Sicily, and the Adriatic to Constantinople and the Black Sea, and it will enable coasting-vessels to avoid the stormy winter passage round Cape Matapan.

It is estimated that an annual traffic of four and a half million tons of goods of all kinds may be expected, and the rates are discriminating. Thus, cargoes to and from the Adriatic will pay from fifty centimes to one franc per ton, according as they be passenger steamers, cargo

steamers, or sailing ships; while vessels to and from other parts will pay from forty to fifty centimes per ton. There is also a charge of one franc for every passenger carried through the Canal. Between the Adriatic ports and the Piræus the Canal route will shorten the passage by about one hundred and fifty miles.

When the Royal fleet came up from the Piræus to open the Canal, did any one recall that in the dim and distant past it was Corinth that sent ships to Athens? In their struggles with Egina the Athenians found themselves ill-prepared with ships, and they applied to the Corinthians for assistance. The Corinthians sent twenty triremes, but having laws against lending, they made formal sale of the vessels to the Athenians for a trifle of five drachmæ each.

At a later date the Athenians accused the Corinthians of cowardice in running away before the battle of Salamis, escaping in a strange little bark assumed to have been sent by the gods. The Corinthians gave a different version of the story, and claimed to be the saviours, not the betrayers, of Greece.

However this may be, the old Corinthians were great in commerce and navigation. The situation of their city on the Isthmus made it the entrepôt of trade between Peloponesus and Livadia. They seem to have been not only capital sailors but also skilful shipbuilders, for Thucydides says it was they who invented the trireme. They were the founders of Syracuse, of Corfu, and of numerous ports along the coast of Greece, and it was by their maritime pursuits that they extended their commerce so as to become famous for their wealth. It may be that their ships were of small account, for Plutarch says that only five persons were allowed to go in each coasting-vessel; but some of the best maritime work in the world has been done with diminutive vessels.

It is odd now to compare the modern war-ships and ocean-steamers, such as the inhabitants of the new town of Isthmia will see passing their doors, with the small galleys of Corinth in her days of glory. On this little Isthmus the old world and the new meet, and an idea which has taken two thousand years to germinate has finally been carried out by Grecian hands, although with barbarian money. By the side of the ancient wall of defence is now running the iron horse of the Peloponesus Railway, and for several years past the iron



road has joined the Piræus with Athens. Is it possible that the Hellenic kingdom is again to become great among the nations?

## ZENOBIA: A COMMONPLACE GIRL.

A STORY IN NINE CHAPTERS.

### CHAPTER VIII.

MR. LOVELL'S fears that he had spoilt Zenobia's night were amply justified by the result. He had spoilt it most effectually; and she spent the long hours of darkness in unprofitable retrospection, going over and over again in memory each word that had been spoken during that painful meeting, and each look that had accompanied it; and only quitting this branch of the all-absorbing subject in order to plunge into yet more useless speculations as to the future. These midnight musings brought no fresh light to bear upon her father's dark accusations, nor did they make that father appear one whit more trustworthy, or better entitled to respect or honour; how could they, when their sole result was to convince her more unquestionably of Mr. Devondale's honour and truth? Her father, she told herself a thousand times, must be either deceiving himself, or wilfully deceiving her: there could be no other explanation of his conduct. But how this should be, she knew not. If he were deceiving himself, his story was most strangely borne out by circumstantial evidence: voice, appearance, name, all appeared to decide, beyond the possibility of dispute, the question of the young tutor's identity with the objectionable opera-singer of the States. And yet, she could not think it: though what object her father could have in wilfully prejudicing her against Mr. Devondale, if he really were all that she believed him to be, she was equally at a loss to guess. His manner to her had not been unkind, and he had not appeared in any way to resent her very evident lack of affection for himself, or of confidence in his word. Rather he had taken both states of mind for granted, regarding them—as, indeed, they were—as the natural result of his own conduct. A reasonable man, certainly, so far as his daughter was concerned; but was he reasonable on other points? Was it—could it be—possible that he had resented some imaginary injury on young Devondale's part,

and did not scruple to avenge himself by blackening his character? Perhaps, even, long brooding on a fancied wrong had resulted, as it sometimes will, in monomania, and he really was not accountable for the dreadful things he said?

Thus one theory pursued another through the girl's weary and bewildered brain, and she found neither peace nor satisfaction in any of them.

One decision, and one alone, had she arrived at, when the tardy dawn at length crept into the room; but that one was of some weight.

She had decided that should a suitable opportunity occur in the course of the day, she would mention her father's name to Mr. Devondale—not that she credited that father's assertions for a moment—no, indeed!—but merely to satisfy her own mind as to whether or no there had been anything in the past to justify Herbert Lovell's claim to a previous knowledge of him. That once ascertained, she might perhaps guess a little more of her father's probable state of mind, and whether it were possible that the whole charge was merely a monstrous delusion on his part. In any case, she would be able to feel that she was thus taking a step herself—though but a very small one—towards clearing up the mystery.

That morning passed very slowly; creeping by, Zenobia thought, as though each moment were weighted with lead. Her aunt talked even more garrulously than usual, and, as it chanced, Mr. Devondale was frequently the subject of her conversation. "I was talking to Mr. Priestley last night—he took me in to dinner—and he was speaking very highly of Mr. Devondale, who, he says, is a young man of very superior attainments. He thinks Mr. Paxton is exceedingly fortunate to have secured him for Cecil, and it is evident he is quite easy in his own mind that he is one of the Devondales of Dartmouth. He has never spoken of his family to you, Zenobia, I suppose?"

"No, never; save in the very vaguest way."

"Ah, well; it is easy to see he is of good family: and—like all who are naturally well-born—he is so accustomed to the idea that he never thinks of mentioning it. It is only vulgar upstarts, like Mrs. Turnour-Smith, who think it necessary to be always expatiating on their claims to genteel extraction; the true lady or gentleman is content to leave you to

take it for granted. Therefore, never speak much of your birth, Zenobia; for to do so would look as though it were open to question."

"And is it not?" the girl asked, with some bitterness.

"My dear! And you a Brabourne! Your uncle would not like to hear you question it; nor do I either, for that matter. I wonder what form the Devondale eccentricity takes. I suppose Mr. Devondale has never alluded to the subject to you, Zenobia?"

"Never; he was little likely to do so."

"Why, I don't know; there are eccentricities and eccentricities, and the eccentricity of the Devondales of Dartmouth need not necessarily be discreditable to them. Certainly, I remember hearing of one ducal house, the members of which always insisted on wearing out their old clothes; but then, as no one could imagine they did it from lack of means to replace them, this little eccentricity did them no great harm. After all, it is all a question of position. Those whose social standing is well assured lose nothing by a reputation for eccentricity, even if they do not gain some little distinction by it; but for those who are still climbing up the social ladder it is a terrible hindrance, if it be nothing worse. However, I should gather from Mr. Priestley's manner that the Devondales of Dartmouth can afford to be a little eccentric without any fear of losing caste."

Thus the old lady talked on, and Zenobia listened to her mechanically, scarcely hearing a word, but wishing—oh, how earnestly!—that the works of her eloquence would run down, and the incessant sound cease.

At length lunch was over, and the hour had arrived for her to go to the Paxtons.

"The doctor is with Mr. Cecil, miss; so Mrs. Paxton says would you kindly wait for a few minutes in the little drawing-room?"

Zenobia followed the servant to the room indicated, scarcely knowing whether she felt more relieved or troubled at the delay. She was anxious to meet Mr. Devondale again, to see for herself how utterly his pleasant, frank face and open, manly bearing refuted her father's charges; but she distrusted her own calmness and self-control after the wearing anxieties of that long and sleepless night, and she feared that such kindly friends as he and Cecil could not fail to remark her wan and weary looks.

The little drawing-room was a bright and cosy room, and far pleasanter in these dull December days than the more stately apartment with which it communicated by means of folding-doors, now heavily curtailed off. The fire burnt cheerily, and threw a genial glow over the warm crimson hangings and luxurious velvet chairs; for Mrs. Paxton delighted in warmth and colour, and, unlike the generality of dwellers in dreary Queen Street, could never have enough of either. Zenobia sat down and tried to think of nothing in particular, but without much success; she rose and moved restlessly about the room, seeking to find some distraction in outward objects from inward trepidation, but all to no purpose. The view from the window was not inspiring, and she gazed on the little town garden for quite five minutes without deriving any benefit from the contemplation of its square grass-plot, with four carefully cut-back trees planted with mathematical precision at the four corners. Zenobia walked back to the fire again, and sat down. The doctor's visits often lasted a long time, and it would never do for her to give way to nervousness like this, or she would be sure to make a fool of herself somehow when the anxiously desired yet dreaded moment of release came. She took up a book from a table near her, and tried to read.

A loud knock at the hall-door startled her, and she laid the book down again and listened—listened intently, and with an absorbed interest, though without the faintest idea of what she expected to hear that could be of the smallest moment to her.

The door was opened, and a subdued sound of voices followed; then some one was shown into the drawing-room beyond the heavy curtains, and the servant said civilly:

"I'll tell Mr. Devondale, sir. He'll be disengaged in a few minutes now."

She went out and closed the door; and a great horror seized on Zenobia, for might it not be her father who had come, despite his promise to her, to insult Mr. Devondale with his horrible accusations? If this were so, she reflected with a shudder, he must at least be himself convinced of their truth. It was with a sinking heart, therefore, that she waited behind the folding-doors, which, by some accident, were not so fast closed as usual, to hear what would follow Mr. Devondale's entrance.

She had not to wait long.

A well-known step on the stair, and Mr. Devondale's voice speaking to the servant—"In the drawing-room, you say? Very well!"—warned her of his approach. She heard him enter the adjoining room, and close the door behind him, and then—the name he uttered was strange to her; the voice that replied to him was a stranger's voice.

Zenobia clasped her hands in a sudden passion of joy and relief; how great her fears had been she scarcely realised till that moment. Yet even then she hardly knew what it was she feared; not the confirmation of her father's words; that worst discovery never occurred to her as possible.

The two men were talking together in subdued tones, so that it would have required an effort on the part of any one in the adjoining room to follow their conversation intelligently. Zenobia, it is needless to say, did not make that effort; she had no wish to listen to a conversation that did not in any way concern her, and she poked the fire vigorously as a gentle hint to the speakers that they might chance to be overheard.

That hint was disregarded. The voices rose presently in the heat of argument till words and phrases began to force themselves upon the girl's attention; she strove not to hear them, not to attach any meaning to them, but all in vain. They caught her attention despite all her efforts, and held it fast.

"Upon my word, Devondale, you'd better reconsider it. A man must be a fool to throw over such a chance as this. A capital company for the provinces, and the certainty of a London engagement to follow. Even with your voice and style it will be long before you have such another offer. It's a very different thing from that scratch company you went starrng with before! I tell you, if you take it, you're a made man!"

"It's no use," Mr. Devondale said quietly; "I've no doubt all you say is right enough, but I've given up all idea of the profession. Why don't you take the opening yourself, Jack?"

"Can't! The parts wouldn't suit me: they're too high for my voice. What's the hitch, Devondale? Family reasons, or is there a lady in the case? Believe me, neither is worth chucking the profession for when a man has a voice like yours."

"We'll say—family reasons, Jack! My people object."

"Well, let them! Nobody's the worse for that. You don't mean to say you'd sacrifice your career—and after such a start as you made, too—for your people's sake? Oh, but you know this is carrying a joke too far altogether! Devondale, you're mad?"

"I hope not!" with the bright, boyish laugh Zenobia knew so well. With what a shock it fell upon her ear now! "You see there are reasons—family reasons, as you say—why my people should feel strongly about it. They've had trouble enough already in connection with operatic engagements, and I don't think it would be fair to disregard their objections."

"And are you going to turn parson to oblige them? The intoning will ruin your voice."

"No, I'm not going into the Church."

"You'll be tired of your bear-leading business in another month. How can you exist in this dull little provincial town; you, who are accustomed to the gay and rollicking life of Bohemia? You'll be cutting your own throat, or your bear's, if you go on with this sort of thing."

"On the contrary, I've never had a better time in my life."

"My dear fellow, who is the lady?"

"Jack, we've been good friends always; and I don't mind telling you this much, that whereas I was resolved to give up the profession when I came here, I'm doubly determined on it now!"

"And I repeat—who is the lady?"

"Never mind at present. But please understand that my decision is final."

"Then there's no more to be said, and I've come here on a wild goose chase. Wild goose? I wrong the noble bird by the comparison; the tamest of barn-door fowls rather. Ta-ta, Devondale! I won't detain you from your gentle bear any longer. You a tutor! How some of the fellows will laugh when they hear it! A pretty teacher of youth, upon my honour!"

Frank Devondale joined lightly in the other's boisterous laughter, and the two young men left the room together.

Then Zenobia rose, pale as death, and paced up and down the room restlessly, clasping and unclasping her hands in a perfect agony of doubt and fear.

"That scratch company you went starrng with before." "They've had trouble enough already in connection with operatic engagements." "The gay and rollicking life of Bohemia." "You a tutor! A pretty teacher of youth, upon my honour!"

These, and other phrases, still rang in her ears, filling her with horror and dismay by the strong confirmation they seemed to give to her father's words. What did it all mean? she asked herself over and over again. What could be the possible explanation of it? No doubt there might be some truth in Herbert Lovell's hints as to Mr. Devondale's past life, and yet the young tutor be absolutely guiltless of the sins laid to his charge; but Zenobia had so fully persuaded herself that the whole story was a fraud or a delusion, that to find it confirmed in even one particular gave her a terrible shock; which, taken in conjunction with the wearing anxiety and trouble of her long hours of sleeplessness, deprived her for the time of all power of calm and dispassionate reasoning.

"You a tutor! A pretty teacher of youth, upon my honour!"

They were the very words her father had used, and that had so haunted her ever since. Zenobia forgot to ask herself whether the very same words might not be used with a difference; and whether Mr. Devondale's friend meant them to be taken seriously. She forgot everything, in short, but the fact that her father had used them, and her own overwhelming fear lest any part of his accusation should prove true.

There were a few parting words at the hall-door; then it was closed with a bang, and Mr. Devondale crossed the hall hastily to the little drawing-room.

"Miss Brabourne," he exclaimed; "have they forgotten—what is the matter? Are you ill?" he added abruptly, struck

by her ghastly pallor, and the strange gaze with which she was regarding him.

"No, no; but—I have been here all the time. I couldn't help hearing——"

"Nothing to make you so pale, surely! You are above the Slowton prejudices, are you not, and won't quite cut me because I was once an opera-singer? Besides, it is all over and done with now. I'm going to be quite respectable in future." But though he spoke lightly, there was a scarcely veiled anxiety in his frank blue eyes—for how could he tell how far those terrible Slowton prejudices might have affected her?

"No, no; it is not that!" she faltered, grasping the back of a chair beside her with trembling fingers; for she felt faint and dizzy, and the room seemed to rock around her. "I want to ask you a question."

"As many as you please. What is it?"

"Tell me what you know of Herbert Lovell?"

"Herbert Lovell?" he repeated blankly.

"Yes. You know him?" How far away and unreal her voice sounded, and what a strange, fixed look had come into her great grey eyes!

"Know him? I?"

"Yes," she reiterated. "Tell me."

"I—I seem to have heard the name," he said thoughtfully: then, as with a sudden flash of recollection, "Yes; I know something of Herbert Lovell, but assuredly I shall not tell you what I know of him."

Zenobia uttered a stifled cry, and fell prostrate at his feet.

The strain had been too much for her and she had fainted.

## NOTICE.

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